



# THE HARLEQUIN

## VFFN Newsletter—Winter Edition—2019

The Christmas Party, the Bird Count... all brought the year 2018 to a close. Some exciting things happened in 2018. Running a club can be exciting? One never knows what will happen next.

In 2018 VFFN finally established its role at Swan Lake. The area is under Section 16 of the Land Act; it is administered by the Ministry of the Environment. It cannot be tenured nor given as a stewardship to anyone, but VFFN is acknowledged as a #1 interested party and is to be kept informed of any developments there.

The profile of Swan Lake is changing. The front entrance (off Hwy 40) will have a new gate and there will be a new parking lot on the west side (off Hwy 5A). The west side will have a gate similar to the Kelly Noon Gate and a kiosk. A new trail will be built that will connect with the Bear Trail. The new parking lot is the one that FortisBC Gas built this winter to transport gas to the lower mainland. VFFN agreed to let it stay, as is, and FortisBC Gas, in return, will install a fence around the perimeter of the parking lot and build the gate and kiosk. The club hopes to attract tourists travelling along 5A.

Our membership continues a downward trend. Our source of additional income (bottle collection) has been affected by the sale of the Hut. The new owners have removed all the donation bins. Bottles are still accepted, but the club needs to find an alternate place for collection.

Three of our members were recognized by SONC for their photo submission to a contest run by that club. VFFN received its first Grant in Aid from the town. Sue Elwell was recognized as a Nature Mentor by VFFN as well as by BC Nature. Also 2020

looms in the horizon and VFFN has the honour of hosting the 2020 BC Nature AGM! It is hoped that many of you will volunteer for the numerous spots that will be available.



Bohemian Waxwings  
Photo: Sue Elwell

## EVENING PRESENTATIONS

DATE: January 8, 2019

TOPIC: Walking in England

PRESENTER: Johanna Nott



Once Johanna arrived in England her first destination was Carlisle in Northern England. From there she headed to Saint Bees on the Irish Sea and began her Coast to Coast Walk, a distance of 200 miles (309 kms) ending in Whitby close to Robin Hood Bay. Robin Hood Bay on the North Sea is the terminus for the Walk in the east. The walk took two weeks to complete.

The scenery was awesome, the level of difficulty variable, but mostly quite extreme. The weather was also variable, mostly rainy and cloudy with a few spectacular sunny days. Once she reached the North Sea at Whitby instead of Robin Hood Bay as suggested by the guide book, she turned her interest to the south.

There she did about 200 miles of the Southwest Coast Path which is about 600 miles in total. The views of the Atlantic Ocean hitting the coast of England and the small coastal villages were incredible. Johanna's excellent photos told the story of her great adventures.



The audience was larger than usual and was delighted and appreciative of the presentation.

Further comments:

The Coast to Coast Walk was originally described by Albert Wainwright in 1973. This walk is 192 miles (309 kms) unofficial and mostly lacking in signage in Northern England. It passes through three national parks, the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, and North York Moors. In the west it starts at Saint Bees on the Irish Sea and finishes at Robin Hood Bay on the North Sea. The Walk encompasses public foot paths, tracks, minor roads, permissive paths and access land. Mr. Wainwright combined different paths/trails making one whole. It does not have National Trail status, hence the lack of signage.



DATE: February 12, 2019

TOPIC: Nature Quizz

PRESENTERS: John Henry & Joann Gabriel

John Henry organized the quiz and Joann Gabriel provided many of the materials. The members in attendance were challenged by the variety of things that they had to be identified. A good time was had by everyone. Johanna Nott, once again, got the most correctly followed closely by Rika Ruebsaat.



## SPECIAL REPORT: JOHN HENRY

Lynx day 25/Jan/2019.

Finally after a few weeks of waiting for the opportunity, I got to accompany Arthur Scully on a Lynx trip. Arthur is doing a PhD that involves studying lynx and bobcat, their ranges, habitat, and a lot of other studies!

Apparently, there are many lynx in this area, mostly in the higher places with deeper snow. The Okanagan/Similkameen is almost the southern limit of their range although there are some in the States in some of the major mountain parks.



Bobcats are almost at the northern limits of their range because they expend too much energy ploughing through deep snow and can't get enough calories to support them in winter. They prefer to stay in the valleys. Lynx on the other hand, are perfectly at home in deep snow. Their huge hairy paws give them great flotation

I met Arthur at the gas station in OK Falls. Pulling a trailer with two snowmobiles, we went up the main logging road to the east of town; calling out our location on the radio in case any logging traffic was coming down. We passed a huge low bed truck that had delivered some heavy equipment and was now leaving. Soon we met trapper Ross in a lay by and proceeded to discuss tactics. We unloaded the snowmobiles, and once again I almost dislocated my "bad shoulder" trying to get one started. Then we were off, on an old trail with the new growth closing in and ploughing through the metre deep powder to the first trap. This trap was empty for the fourth time! Apparently, the lynx had sidled in from the side, carefully avoiding the foothold trap.

The small traps are rubber lined, with a large gap to accommodate the thickness of the forelimb. As a demonstration to schoolchildren, Arthur has sprung the trap upon his own hand frequently without any ill effects. As this area is on Ross's trap line, he sets the traps. He lays out the open trap, covers it with a scrap of greaseproof paper so that snow doesn't freeze to it, then sprinkles it with dirt, or a little snow. Branches are then arranged so that there is only one way to get to the bait, across the trap.

The bait this time was a dead snowshoe hare (which comprises 96%+ of a lynx's diet). Above the bait, suspended just above the ground, hung a dead California quail. A piece of metallic ribbon was left hanging in the lower branches of the tree, and even an old CD at one trap. Cats don't hunt with their noses, but primarily with their eyes. If they see something interesting, they will investigate. The shiny tape draws their attention; then they see the hanging bait and come for a closer look. However, most of the traps on this day drew a blank; even though there were tracks around some, and the bait was gone!



Arthur also uses homemade cages. These are about a cubic meter and constructed of plumbing plastic pipe and chicken wire. The front has a sliding down door that falls down when a wooden plate inside is depressed by the animals foot. Bait is hung inside, and the cages ,like the traps, must be inspected everyday! After putting in many kilometres on trails and logging roads, Arthur went to check the very last trap.

“We have a cat!” he announced, and I quickly waddled over in the knee—deep snow. The lynx had been caught before as it already had a tracking collar on it. It was hissing and growling and was absolutely ferocious looking! It had already eaten the hanging bait; only a bone was left. As Arthur put his hand over the top of the cage, it leapt upwards with such force that I swear it could almost come through the wire! I took a couple of pics before Arthur quickly bent down and from the side, lifted up the door. The lynx lightly bounded over the snow and in two seconds went across the trail and disappeared into the trees. I think it barely touched the ground. Obviously, none the worst for it's ordeal, and it did get a large free meal! A disappointing day for Arthur, but an interesting one for me!

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## SPEAKERS FOR 2019

Tues. Jan. 8th	Johanna Nott, Travels in England
Tues. Feb. 12th	AGM — Nature Quiz
Tues. Mar. 12th	Tanya Luszcz, Birds, Cats, & Bats
Tues. Apr. 9th	Doug Wahl, Forest Practices
Tues. May 14th	Bob Handfield, Geology of Western US National Parks
Tues. Jun. 11th	David Manning, Turkey Vultures
July & August	No Meetings
Tues. Sep. 10th	Lee Mcfayden, Bees
Tues. Oct. 8th	Lisa Scott, South Africa
Tues. Nov. 12th	Matthias Bieber, Banding Songbirds

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**FIELD TRIPS—2019**—All field trips meet at Billy's for Carpooling, unless indicated otherwise. Most of these hikes are being led by John—250-295-7154—unless another person's name is given to contact. **It is very much appreciated, if you intend to participate, that you respond by Saturday 6:00 p.m. Plans can change if no interest is shown. Hikes are subject to change depending on unavoidable circumstances.**

Sun: Jan. 13th	Open House @ China Ridge—Parker/Owen Snowshoe Hike
Sun: Jan. 27th	Viewpoint—CRT— <b>Moderate</b>
Sun: Feb. 10th	Manning Park—3 Falls Trail—4.4 km one way— <b>Moderate Hike</b> —trail goes to Derek Falls—Lv. 9:00 am—Hope to see plentiful animal tracks.
Sun: Feb. 24th	Nickel Plate—Trails within the Core Area— <b>Moderate Hike</b> —\$10 trail fee—Lv. 9:00 am
Sun: Mar. 10th	Separation Lake & August Lake—Lv. 10:00 am— <b>Easy</b> —Birding
Sun: Mar. 24th	Rd #22 & <b>Easy</b> hike next to winery—Lv. 8:30 am—birding, etc.
Sun: Apr. 7th	Tour de Keremeos & Ginty Pond—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Easy</b> —Visiting riparian areas—Outing begins at bike Trail on old RR line, touring wetlands adjacent to the bike trail; going through Keremeos to the other end of the bike trail; then Ginty's Pond in Cawston
Sun: Apr. 28th	Osoyoos Desert Centre—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Easy</b> — <b>Fee \$10.00</b> —Learn about desert ecology, habitat restoration, & conservation of endangered eco-sys. in the Okanagan
Sun: May 12th	Tour A & B—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Easy/Moderate</b> —A visit to Currie Meadows to look at the flora and birds in the different sluices in the area; the trip continues in the p.m. to look at more birds and flowers off the China Creek Road. This will be a 2020 venue and we are looking for tour guides.
Sun: May 26th	Hwy 5A wetlands & Circle Tour (Kane Valley area)—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Easy</b> —View Numerous lakes—main attraction, wetlands at the junction of Tulameen Road and Hwy 5A.—Kane Valley Loop to check out the lakes—all day trip
Sun: Jun. 2nd	Wendy Hawkes—Tour of Swan Lake—Meet at Billy's—Lv. 9:00 am—or meet at Swan Lake @9:15 am—Wendy will narrate info. from a First Nations' perspective.
Sun: Jun. 9th	KVR Ride—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Moderate to Difficult</b> ride—Start at White Sands Beach—Finish in town (~20 km)—Attraction: the Tulameen River and the Geology of the area—Take most of the day—also a 2020 venue—want feedback after the ride.

Sun: Jun. 23rd	Open
Sun: Jul. 14th	Hembrie Mtn. Area (Top of the World)—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Moderate</b> —An interesting area that abounds in butterflies & flowers and a wonderful view at the top.
Sun: July 28th	<a href="#">New</a> Tulameen Mtn Trip—Lv. 8:00 am—8 to 10 hour hike (round trip)— <b>Difficult</b> hike but worth the effort—Rewarded with magnificent view along the ridge to the top.
Sun: Aug. 11th	Viewpoint Loop & Paintbrush Trail—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Easy/Moderate</b> —located in Manning Park, the Viewpoint Loop is small part of the Heather Trail and the Paintbrush Trail goes to Blackwall Peak—attraction is the alpine show
Sun: Aug. 25	Hope Pass—Lv. 9:00 am—easy—3hr—An <b>Easy</b> hike, often following an old wagon trail, leading to sub-alpine meadows, & hopefully to mushrooms.
Sun: Sep. 8th	Jim Kelly Peaks—Lv. 8:30 am— <b>Difficult</b> —all day—An annual outing that gives great satisfaction to the hiker with incredible views of meadows and mountains, and more importantly, often plentiful blueberries and huckleberries.
Sun: Sep. 22nd	Lundbom Lk/Nicola Lak—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Easy</b> —Stop to look at lakes in the area and then follow the Old Nicola Road down to Hwy 5A & across to Nicola Lake Riparian areas. Wonderful vistas of the Merrit Valley and the grasslands on the Old Nicola road. An all day trip followed by dinner at Quilchena Lodge for those interested.
Sun: Oct. 6th	Connelly Crk — Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Easy/Moderate</b> —Drive to km 9—hike up to CRT Cabin and then on to Bob's Shelter & Return
Sun: Oct. 20th	Frosty (Manning Park)—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Difficult</b> —all day—all up then all down on the way back—views are spectacular, esp. of the larch trees that turn colour.
Sun: Nov. 10th	Cinder Cone & environs—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Moderate</b> —2 hours—Walk up a steep hill to a very good viewpoint. Fall flora and fauna available.
Sun: Nov. 24th	Owl's Head—Lv. 9:00 am— <b>Moderate</b> —a favourite of many of our members, this hike goes down a path to the site of an old cabin, from there a rock structure in the shape of an owl's head can be seen—total hours of hiking 2 to 3 hrs.

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Contributions to the Harlequin are welcome. If you submit a photo, do a write up to go with it. Please send your submissions to Mary, [vffnbc@gmail.com](mailto:vffnbc@gmail.com)

## Nature's Giant vs City's Giant



Princeton, BC



Vancouver, BC

