



Denman Conservancy Association

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 60, Denman Island, B.C. V0R 1T0

April 2018

Denman Island Birdathon

Spring is in the air and the birds know it. Just walk outside, especially in the morning, and you'll hear them singing: warblers, sparrows, kinglets, thrushes and finches. Maybe they are tweeting about the upcoming Birdathon which will take place from 4 pm on May 25th to 4 pm on the 26th.

The Birdathon pledge forms are now printed and the rules are simple. Do the Birdathon on your own, or make up a team with your friends. Ask your friends and/or neighbours to sponsor your birding efforts based on the number of bird species you identify (or a flat donation sum). All money raised will go to the Denman Conservancy Association (DCA) for its important conservation work on the island. Pledge sheets are available at the Free Post at Abraxas Books under B for Birdathon, or call Wendy or Ken at 335-1765.

Did I mention prizes? Islanders have donated many great items that we will give out during our End-of-Birdathon get-together. Prize categories will include one for the youngest birder, the oldest birder and the most unusual bird (no pink flamingos, please). There will also be spot prizes for seeing a common bird such as a Bald Eagle or American Robin at the closest time to a pre-selected time. The biggest prize, of course, is the knowledge that by taking part in the Birdathon, you are helping to protect habitat on Denman Island.

Bird-related events leading up to the Birdathon:

1) During **May the Denman Craft Shop** will feature "Bird Art." Our feathered friends will be interpreted in a variety of media: pottery, fabric, paper, jewellery, felt and any other media that happen to fly by. Shop hours are 1-4 daily and 10-4 on Saturday. Starting May 20th, the shop will be open every day from 10-4.

2) **The Old Man and the Vultures**
May 16th at 7:30 at the Denman Activity Centre
Naturalist Dave Manning invites us to "join him on the bluffs and in the forests of his Gulf Islands as he shares his experiences with turkey vultures.

3) **Birdsong identification** walk led by Joan Scruton and Patrick Fawkes. Meet at the Central Park trailhead at 8:30 am on Tuesday, May 22nd.

4) **Bird Year slide show** and screening of *Malkolm the Birder Boy*. Wednesday, May 22nd, 7:00 pm at the Denman Activity Center.

5) **Basic bird photography** with Dennis Forsyth. 10 am to noon on Wednesday, May 23rd at Dennis's place at 2350 East Road. You'll need a camera that allows you to control shutter-speed and aperture.

6) **Birding Basics for Beginners** with Ken Madsen and Steve Carballeira. Meet at 9 am on **Thursday, May 24th** at the Central Park trailhead.

7) **Denman Birdathon: 4 pm on Friday, May 25th to 4 pm on Saturday May 26th.**

8) **Birdathon walk** with Wendy Boothroyd and Ken Madsen. If you are taking part in the Birdathon and would like to work together to identify some birds, meet us at 9 am on **Saturday, May 26th** at the Central Park trailhead.

9) **Birdathon wind-up potluck** picnic and slide show by Dennis Forsythe. Meet at 6 pm at the Old School on **Saturday, May 26th.**

10) The Denman quilters are hard at work (or is that hard at play?) on a **bird quilt that will be raffled** to raise money for DCA. The quilt will be unveiled on the Saturday of the birdathon.



On the Land

-by Erika Bland

Denman Naturalists Invited to Assist with Annual DCA Covenant Monitoring

A big part of my responsibility as Land Manager for DCA is monitoring Conservation Covenant Areas. Each year, usually in spring when the most flowers are blooming and birds are singing, I visit covenanted lands that have been voluntarily set aside by property owners for conservation in perpetuity. I check on boundary pins, note any signs of disturbance, and often take repeat photographs at specific sites so we can keep track of ecological changes over time. Last year I tried something new: I invited keen and knowledgeable local naturalists to accompany me and record bird or plant species they observed within these unique places. It is way more fun to do this kind of monitoring not alone, but with observant nature-nerd friends. Also the final reports I sent to property owners were made more interesting by the added species lists these helpful folks compiled.

What I'm going for here is multi-tasking (big surprise), but it's also *more* than that: Growing the plant and wildlife knowledge of local people and places will give us all a better understanding Denman ecology and changes to it in the long-term. The more we can record, year after year, about the ecological and biocultural uniqueness and importance of these special protected places, the better the chance they will continue to be protected into an uncertain future where land and biodiversity conservation is not everyone's top priority.

Last year, the most thrilling highlight from monitoring was getting to see a rare Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis laingi*, a.k.a. "NOGO") in the Railway Grade Marsh Covenant Area, with Mike Morrell and Jenny Balke. The *laingi* subspecies, like all Goshawks, requires large areas of old-growth and mature forest. Harvesting of timber removes much suitable habitat, and shorter stand rotations here on the coast have resulted in repeat logging in many areas before forests can grow back to a structure suitable for goshawks. Because of this, NOGO is in jeopardy, with less than 1000 known breeding pairs in BC as of 2008. It is on the BC Red List, and the federal Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) list as Threatened. What a special treat to see one in my DCA travels, thanks to my naturalist helper friends! If you're eager to pursue similar thrills, please be in touch.



Checkerspots Mating

Settlement Lands Grants Update

Well, somehow, I made it! In a whirlwind of learning, and with a healthy dose of self-doubt, I managed to complete Year 1 of the major multi-year grants awarded for DCA's management work at the Settlement Lands. In 2017/18 (with a LOT of help from our friends) we worked on projects funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program and National Wetlands Conservation Fund, and the BC Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation.

Invasive species got a major whack-back, with extensive work on Scotch Broom removal along Central Road, as well as digging up a small patch of everlasting pea. DCA was able to purchase some hand tools, a brush cutter and reciprocating saw for this, which help save our backs and elbows. DCA's "No Bloom on Broom" campaign (starting now!) will keep up this effort (see Pg. #3 for work bee details). In the coming year, we will work on removing a large patch of introduced St. John's Wort and scattered large English holly plants.

We were able to contribute to the cost of fencing to help keep cattle out of Homestead Marsh at the eastern boundary, and thanks to Alan Schmidt that fence is now in place with just a few wires left to string. Jenny Balke, Stirling Fraser, and John Millen installed two bat houses at Homestead Marsh in that area, and Jenny will monitor bat species there as they return from hibernation.

Tynan Phillips helped us with research toward our new Wetland Monitoring Program, helped to install water depth gauges at Homestead and Pickles Marshes, and selected sites to monitor water quality and beaver activity. We will begin this summer using our fancy new YSI-Pro Plus Multi Parameter water quality meter; Jenny Balke, Steve Carballera and myself plan to offer a water quality monitoring workshop to kick that off, sometime in June. In the Butterfly Reserve, boundary posts were installed, and interpretive signage added to the kiosk. And we cleared more Broom! Willow Hunt-Scott helped with research toward our Demonstration Pollinator Garden, with input from Louise Bell and the Memorial Society. A water cistern was donated by CanWest tanks. Garden beds were made by Michael McNulty, and fencing will go in once I can wrangle some hands and time. Soon we will be able to start seeding and transplanting flower species friendly to Taylor's Checkerspot and other pollinators—which will be flying soon! (See Pg. #3).

There is more, but I'm out of room. For all of the above, a HUGE THANK YOU is in order, to our funders and to all those who helped work on these projects over the past year!

New Board Member

Hi! My name is Luise Hermanutz and I've lived on Denman for almost 3 years. I'm very happy to be part of the DCA as a new Board member. There's a lot to learn because DCA is such an active group on the island. I am a field biologist and plant ecologist and do my research in the eastern Boreal Forest and Limestone Barrens of Newfoundland, and the Tundra in northern Labrador. Very different ecosystems than the west coast, so I've spent lots of time getting to know our island. I'm interested in all aspects of conservation and management, and look forward to working with the DCA and community members, and helping out with wetland conservation, habitat restoration, invasive species control and getting school groups involved in Conservancy projects. Look forward to meeting the many great Conservancy volunteers this summer.

It's That Time Again... to go Taylor's Checker-spotting! The flight season is upon us for Denman's endangered butterfly. Anytime from the end of April to the beginning of June, with the peak in sightings usually around the May long weekend, you might see TCs on sunny days in open meadow and vernal wetland areas where there are early-flowering nectar species such as woodland strawberry, western buttercup, and woolly sunflower. The adult males emerge first, and do spectacular mating 'dances' to attract females, who lay their larvae in wet meadow habitats with vernal pools (wet in winter and dry up in summer) that contain larval food plants, mainly known to be Veronica (Thyme-leaved and Marsh varieties) and Plantain (Ribwort) species. Please take great care if you go looking for TCs in these areas. Move slowly and stick to well-worn trails where you can see where you walk, as sensitive eggs and larvae could be anywhere.

Volunteer with DCA! (Contact Erika at dcalandmanager@gmail.com for more information.)

"No Bloom on Broom" Work Bee: Wednesday May 2nd, 10am-Noon. Rain or Shine. Meet at Corner of Chickadee and Central Roads in the Settlement Lands. Bring gloves, loppers/secateurs, water, long pants, sunhat.

Central Park Trails Clean-up – 1st week of June, date and time TBA

Wetland monitoring summer volunteers needed! Get geared up with a free Wetland Keepers Course put on by BC Wildlife Federation. The next course nearby is in Nanaimo from May 4-6. For more info visit <http://www.bcdf.net/index.php/upcoming-events>.

Sometime in June, Jenny Balke and Steve Carbaillera plan to put on a water quality workshop on Denman.

Naturalists: Help with Covenant Monitoring (Various dates through May)

Bats

Denman Hornby Bat Program

Want to know if bats are in your bat house? Contact the bat program to arrange a site visit about monitoring your bat house this spring/summer. Some additional bat houses will be available in the first week of May.

In June-July the bat program will offer **bat walks** in DCA lands to identify bats at dusk

Bats need your help – the **White Nose Disease**

Monitoring Program asks us to send **BATS found DEAD** or **new spring bat FECES** (up May to 31) for testing for this devastating disease.....

Please call the bat program to collect dead bats or new bat feces (before May 31)

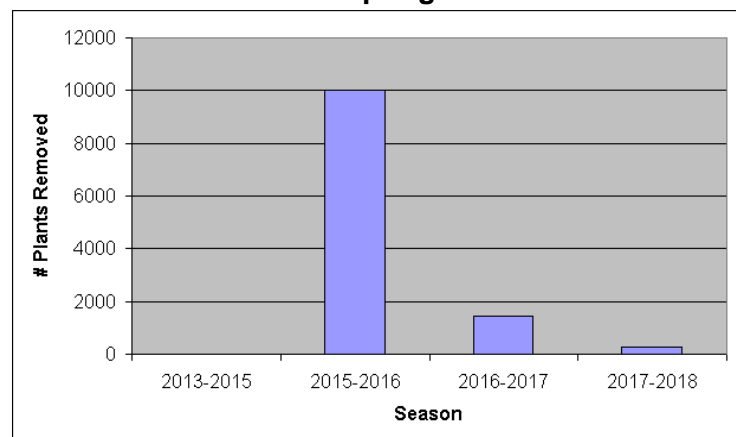
Call 335-2151 or email di2017bats@gmail.com



Spartina

Control of Dense-flowered cordgrass *Spartina densiflora* on Denman shorelines has been an international success story. A BC government agreement with the USA required removal of this species – we had to dig it or they were going to use pesticides to kill it! This fall-winter was the third season of monitoring and removing any re-growth of this invasive marine grass after digging up the original plants. Dire predictions of failure, especially as no pesticides were used, followed the early digging. Well so far with careful oversight the project is well on its way to success. The data shown below suggests that Denman shores could soon be completely free of this plant species if no seeds come in from elsewhere.

Denman *Spartina densiflora* Data Summary Fall 2013 to Spring 2018



DCA Room Renovation Update

The DCA room renovation at the old school is finally finished and came in under budget. The walls have all been painted and there is new flooring. Anyone who has embarked on a renovation will know how much work is really encompassed by the simple phrase “new paint and new flooring”. This is compounded in a building that is as old as the old school is.

The ceiling tiles were all removed so the drop ceiling metal framing could be painted white to match the tiles. (A big thank you to Michael Rapati for lending us mobile scaffolding that we could push around the room.) The new wall colour is white to act as a built in projector screen for slide presentations and the trim is a colour that some see as obviously green and some insist is clearly gray (or is it “grey?”). The floor is linoleum tile in a colour best described as a “forest floor”. The blackboards are all black which seems to have been the original colour when the classrooms were new.

Thanks have to go to: de Neen Baldwin for her intelligent and sensible decorating advice; the painters (Jasmina, Mikel, Roxanne, Kyle Stirling and Tim); carpenter James Fisher who moved a door; and Stirling Fraser, Tim Fuchs, and Yoshi Yoshihara moved the entire contents of the DCA rooms back and forth several times. Heroic work considering the weight of a fireproof file cabinet (what exactly are we hiding in there?)

House of Color, provided the wonderful Benjamin Moore brand paint and donated the blackboard paint (and we have some left over if anyone is interested), and Central Builders did the flooring. Another 100 years and we will have to do it again.

Herbicides in Fillongley Park

Last Spring, when you were taking a leisurely stroll in Fillongley Park, you may have stopped in your tracks at the sign that announced “Herbicide Treatment.” BC Parks had begun a program to apply Garlon to eradicate holly in the Park. Unfortunately, there was no clarity as to exactly where it had been applied or its toxicity, meaning visitors and their children were uncertain where it was even safe to go. Over the past year, DCA has been in contact with Parks to find out about the herbicide, its toxicity, its ability to translocate, its persistence in the environment, the treatment plan and monitoring program. DCA, with its track record of holly removal at other Denman conservation sites, has suggested to Parks the use of mechanical means, not chemical means, for holly eradication. This continues to be a work-in-progress. DCA is cooperating with the Pesticide Free Committee and DIRA Parks Committee on this issue. A site visit is scheduled with Parks this Spring. Stay tuned.

AGM held 26th February

AGM attendees filled the Back Hall and were surprised to find themselves entertained by the enthusiastic ‘Broom Orchestra’. ..As well as the usual reports and voting in the Board. The special resolution to amend the bylaws was passed. It gives the Board authority to spend up to \$30,000 without first consulting the members.

DCA Board of Directors For 2018

Jenny Balke
Doug Bell
Anne Fisher - - - - -Co-Chair
Stirling Fraser
DD Fuchs
Luise Hermanutz
Jackie Hipwell - - - - - Co-Chair
John Millen
Ron Shepherd - - - - - Treasurer
Patti Willis
Susan-Marie Yoshihara- Secretary

Hornby Marine Conservation Initiative

The DCA board was the beneficiary of a fascinating lecture and slide show by Grant Scott of Conservation Hornby Island (CHI) at its March board meeting. (Note: DCA Board meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month at the Old School and are open to the public)

Grant outlined the impressive work the CHI is doing in its campaign to ultimately have the herring fishery brought to an end in this area.

CHI, after working many years to conserve 39% of the land base of Hornby Island has turned its attention to the marine waters around it and embarked on a Marine Conservation Initiative. The ultimate goal is to have the destructive roe/reduction herring fishery brought to an end. Their first initiative is a wonderful book of maps, charts, and photographs called the “Hornby Island Marine Conservation Atlas” (\$20 from CHI and a fantastic gift for your summer visitors)

Grant gave the Board an abbreviated lecture on the scientific rationale for their campaign to end the herring fishery. The DCA Board is keenly interested in the Marine Conservation Initiative and will be looking at ways to participate with CHI in the future.

Contributors to this Newsletter:

Jenny Balke, Erika Bland, Stirling Fraser, Luise Hermanutz, Ken Madsen, John Millen, Patti Willis.