



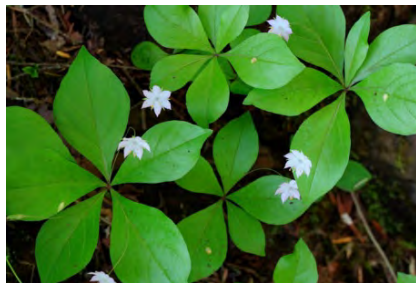
June 2024
Volume 29, Issue 2

Arrowsmith Naturalists NEWS

President's Corner

Spring has sprung in the Biosphere! And I don't care what anyone says, I love the rain! On two walks this week I've spotted trillium with full seed heads; red huckleberries formed and ripening; star flowers with their invisible, hair-like flower stems; and thimbleberry and native blackberry brambles in bloom.

ANATS has been busy this spring. As always, we did the Brant count and saw 2000 more than last year. We're not sure what this means statistically, but it makes us feel good for sure. Also, fewer dogs were seen on the beach so maybe the message is getting through.



Western starflower, Jim Thorne

We took part in the Brant Wildlife Festival weekend sponsored by the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region and it was a huge success.

Lynne Brookes taught a birding course and helped at the French Creek site, we set up at the Community Park for the Brant-in-the-Bay event and several hundred Brant cooperated by parking in the water where we could help visitors spot them with our scopes and binoculars. Lots of fun.

Even more fun was the Brant Wildlife Children's Festival at Arrowview Elementary School where our games were a hit with the kids. Rosemary Taylor lined the school walls with her pollinator posters and the teachers immediately borrowed them all for a teaching unit on pollinators! Progress!

And what a weekend it was! The BC Nature AGM May 9-12 and it was a crashing success—180 people attended. Many thanks to Toni Wyckoff and her organizing committee, and the 70 volunteers who stepped up and showed up. COVID laid me low but my heart was there.

Watch your emails for the next outings and speakers that are planned and the upcoming picnic at Rath Trevor in July. And remember to get out and enjoy nature!

Liz Thorne

We respectfully acknowledge that we live within the unceded traditional territories of the Snaw-naw-as people and the Qualicum First Nation, the traditional keepers of these lands.

We intend to nurture better understanding and pursue opportunities for collaboration with our First Nations neighbours.

Officers and Contacts

President: Elizabeth Thorne **Vice Pres:** Sally Soanes
Past Pres: Sally Soanes **BC Nature:** Elizabeth Bredberg
Special Projects: Lynne Brookes
Treasurer: Helen Davidson **Stewardship:** Dave Hutchings
Exec. Secretary: Mark Mazurski **Speakers:** Committee
Mtg. Secretary: seeking volunteers

Membership: Bonnie Mullin

Conservation/Enviro. Gary & Ronda Murdock

Directors: Elizabeth Bredberg

Archivist(s): Diane & Jim Goodwin **Outreach Contact:** Sue Wilson

Email & Zoom: Elizabeth Bredberg

Website: Kerry Baker **Facebook:** Tom Constable

Newsletter: Sylvia Riessner

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Club/Membership Information

Check our [website](#) or [Facebook page](#) or request information by writing to:

Arrowsmith Naturalists, Box 1542,
Parksville, BC V9P 2H4

Note: If you know of someone who needs a few words of comfort or encouragement, please contact our Outreach person—

Sue Wilson 250-248-7280 susiebird@gmail.com

Upcoming events...

Dates ...	Jun 17-23	Pollinator Week Canada – pollinator info and plant give-aways at QB & Errington Markets by Liz & Rosemary! Displays at MABR Outreach Centre, Qualicum Beach (Jun 20 – 22)
	Jun 27	ANats General Meeting – “Cold Water Snorkelling – Sara Ellison”
	Jun 30	Donate to help The Nature Trust of BC to purchase (and protect) 13 acres (5.2 hectares) along the Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River.
	Jul 18	Annual Picnic at Rathtrevor Provincial Park – BYO food, BYO chairs
	Oct 20	Mushroom Festival (new venue: Qualicum Beach Civic Centre)

IN MEMORIAM – Elizabeth Salomon-de-Friedberg

Early in May, we were informed that one of our members, Elizabeth Salomon-de-Friedberg had passed away. She had been active in Arrowsmith Naturalists' projects, from speaking to the public and passing out brochures during the struggle to protect the remnants of the Parksville Wetland, to volunteering to prepare minutes for monthly ANats meetings that were a marvel of thorough reporting.

We wanted to honour her memory by sharing some of the experiences we had while working with Elizabeth on different projects. As well, the ANats Board made a donation to the [Nature Trust Shelly Road acquisition fund](#) in her name.

Liz Thorne (ANats President)

“We worked on revamping the Constitution together when I learned several things about her. She had an incisive intelligence; she was extremely well organized and she never forgot anything until the brain fog set in, and she was passionate about defending Nature.”

Sally Soanes (ANats Past Prez)

“I went to a protest about Fairy Creek and saw Elizabeth, with her sign waving away so enthusiastically. I went up to talk to her and was impressed with her knowledge of the issue and passion for saving old growth forests and her willingness to get out there and do something about it. I asked her if she'd like to get more involved and so found a very competent general meeting secretary. Elizabeth stepped right in and did such a wonderful job.

When she got the cancer diagnosis she just kept on working and kept me on the straight-and-narrow, which was definitely needed. Not once did she ever complain or moan about anything. Even when I knew she was struggling, she just kept on going and that was really difficult to see but I so admired her spirit and dedication. She had an amazing eye for detail (which I absolutely do not have) and it was an enormous help to me.

I loved her dedication to nature and her indignation at its destruction. We were in lock step there. I will miss her generous, kind and thoughtful nature.”

Sue Wilson (Outreach)

“Elizabeth liked to walk and would walk from her place off Pym Street to the Englishman River Estuary to help pull broom. She “walked the talk.” I know that, at least once, she took the bus to Nanaimo to go Christmas shopping.

In addition to her rigorous intellect, she was a wonderful baker. Her cookies were delicious and a quiche that she brought to a potluck went quickly. I remember that after her surgery, Elizabeth had her sister leave the ten pound bag of flour on the kitchen floor so she could get at it easily.

Elizabeth was on the committee for the 2024 BC Nature AGM and contributed a great deal by researching, minute-taking, buying the name tags and donating to the Silent Auction.”

Sylvia Riessner (Newsletter)

“My last encounter with Elizabeth was a happy one. She had recovered from treatment and registered to go on her first-ever cycling tour in Portugal last fall. She was very excited and talked about how hard she had been working to get better at riding, using her brother's old road bike. I volunteered my partner's expertise to help her understand shifting the gears and she came by so that he could demonstrate. She picked it up quickly and, I heard afterwards, thoroughly enjoyed her Portugal adventure.”

BC Nature AGM and Conference: Taking Action for Nature**May 9-12, 2024****Hosted by the Arrowsmith Naturalists****Coordinator: Toni Wyckoff**

During a spectacular four days of sunshine in May, over 180 members from all across BC joined us for a fun-filled AGM. We kept to our theme of "Taking Action for Nature" by featuring speakers who have had success and shown that it is possible to save animals, forests, estuaries, rivers and oceans. Their presentations highlighted the importance of joining with other organizations and getting the public involved. Another crucial aspect they shared was how to communicate with politicians to support nature-related causes. Real-life examples were discussed, such as the ongoing struggle to protect and preserve sensitive ecosystems like Harewood Plains in Nanaimo.

Over 70 volunteers contributed their efforts during the four-day event and many had worked tirelessly over the preceding 12 months. Sadly, one of our most enthusiastic volunteers, Elizabeth Solomon-de-Friedberg passed away before the AGM. She was a great supporter of the AGM and contributed much to the event's success.

We were lucky to find that some of our volunteers were happy to lead early morning outings! In September, we started out with one 6:00 am leader for early morning birding. By May, we needed six leaders. Who knew so many people wanted to get up at 4 am?

A big, heart-felt "THANK YOU", to each and every volunteer that helped to make the event a huge success.



L-R: Bonnie Mullin, Helen Davidson, Maureen LaFleche, Toni Wyckoff, Lynne Brookes, Pat Jacobson, Sally Soanes, Sue Wilson

The outings were chosen to highlight many different natural habitats throughout Oceanside including spectacular rivers, waterfalls, woodlands, wildflowers or parks. Outings could be selected to suit individuals.

We do hope everyone enjoyed themselves and went home well-fed and happy. The icing on the cake was the clear skies and 20 degree Celsius weather — the only nice weekend we had in May.

What people said:

"My wife, Linda and I, want to thank all of you for an excellent past few days of meetings, presentations and activities in Qualicum Beach at the 2024 BCN AGM. We also extend our thanks and congratulations to the Arrowsmith Naturalists." *Harold*

"...be sure that the Arrowsmith Naturalists know how grateful we are for the fantastic job they did hosting the meeting--great venue, food, field trips, etc.!" *Nancy*

"...all wonderful and the Arrowsmith Naturalists' hard work made for great success..." *Marg*

"...that was just a great conference you and your terrific team put on!!..." *Genevieve*

"I don't know which theory I like better to explain the microphone "explosions" --demons or solar storms..." *Nancy*

"Everyone there should have come away with inspiration for the future and gratitude for the past." *Harold*

"I want to extend my huge appreciation to everyone in your club for the extremely well organized, informative and FUN annual general meeting you put on. Everything was so well executed. The speakers and presentations were excellent. The catering and all the food was superb and delicious. The field trips took us to interesting locations with engaging histories and stories." *Shirley*

"Very much appreciated co-leading with Liz and getting to lead tours twice at my beloved Hamilton Marsh and relive memories from 51 years ago when I was a young BC Parks Park Naturalist working in Arrowsmith." *Genevieve*

AGM Moments

photos by David Helem

1. Englishman River Estuary Outing



2. Registration Desk



3. Painting on bags activity
Sandra & Dan Gray



4. Silent Auction



5. Silent Auction



6. Visitors from Langley





7. Visitors from Cowichan



8. Visitors from Haida Gwaii, Kitimat, White Rock

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Dave Hutchings

I can't believe that we're almost officially into summer! I—and I'm sure many of you—are breathing a sigh of relief that we've avoided a really hot spring and gained some much-needed moisture. Our gardens and Nature's ecosystems are much the better for the cooler, wetter weather. Nevertheless, the experts inform us that we're not out of the prolonged drought yet.

The Englishman River Estuary (ERE) has certainly been in the spotlight over the past few months. During the Brant Wildlife Festival, two groups were introduced to the ERE's history, threats to the ERE's health, and the ongoing challenges of logging and development. During each tour, participants were guided along the forested trail along the river and then to a view of the open estuary and the salt marsh. Hopefully, about 30 people left with an appreciation of the value of estuaries and the need to conserve and restore these precious ecosystems.

During the BC Nature AGM, David Helem and I led another group of naturalists on a similar field trip. As one might expect, this group was more familiar with the ecological value of estuaries but less familiar with the history of the ERE and the pressures and challenges faced by the ERE and watershed. It was interesting to hear the experiences of fellow naturalists involved in similar stewardship projects, the issues they faced and some of their solutions. Both David and I received compliments for the efforts of our ANats stewards.

A few weeks ago, I also had the pleasure of leading a working tour for a group of 18 post-graduate international students participating in the TRANSECTS project, a transdisciplinary learning lab at VIU. Students came from South Africa, Canada, Germany, Iran and beyond, and were engaged in studies such as forestry, agronomy, agriculture, archeology, and economics. The dominant theme in the students' work was the impact of climate change and the work needed to mitigate and adapt to climatic changes and their effects on the environment.



Students from VIU TRANSECTS lab

Our tour focused on the invasive plants in the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere and the measures required to control and mitigate their impact. After a short introduction to the ERE and a lively question- and-answer session, we began to identify our main invasive plants and to do some pulling, cutting and digging of Scotch broom and daphne. The students worked with energy and were quite impressed with the effort needed to pull, cut and dig out broom and daphne. It was encouraging to receive probing, serious questions about our work but to also learn of the depth of knowledge and determination these young people are directing toward tackling the problems brought on by climate change.

In the last while, our ANats stewards have been hard at work removing stands of daphne from sections of the forest and the edges of the salt marsh. The plants were cut, the roots dug out and the material bagged for collection by the Nature Trust for disposal in the RDN landfill. At the same time, some errant blooming broom was cut down and the tedious work begun to remove English ivy.

In the next while, however, our attention will turn to maintaining the control of spotted knapweed. Over the past few years we seem to have succeeded in controlling the spread of this noxious invasive by cutting the flower stalks, thereby preventing seed from developing. "Knappweeding" is a welcome break from the cutting, digging and bagging of daphne. So, for those of you who would like a gentle introduction to contributing to our stewardship at the ERE, the next few outings would be ideal.

If you would like join us, even on an occasional basis, let me know at dhutchings40@shaw.ca and I'll place on our notification list.

Alternatively, take some time to walk the trails of the ERE— it's a place to find Mother Nature at her best. Have a great summer.



ANats stewards at work

SPRING OUTINGS

Toni Wyckoff (*et al*)

(additional notes contributed by Bonnie and Helen; images from Bonnie, Helen, Kerry, Toni)

After all the winter cancellations we thought we were home free, we weren't! Two more outings were cancelled because of snow and fog. The exchange visit in February, to Port Alberni's Somass River Estuary, was a lovely and informative walk.

In March we visited Buttertubs Marsh (and saw cedar waxwings). Despite rain on March 23, five brave souls showed up to walk Collier Dam/Chase Falls in Nanaimo.

In April, the Alberni Nature Club visited us for a much enjoyed walk around the Englishman River Estuary. We have agreed that we should exchange visits more often. We also visited Jack Point/Biggs Park near Nanaimo – lots of flowers and Chinook Forest along the Trent River near Royston (Apr 24).

Our best weather was the four days of the AGM in May. There were 25 ANats, eight Nanaimo Naturalists, three BC Nature visitors and eight non-members who lead 27 outings and seven early-morning birdings. Hats off to all those volunteers; several did two or three outings.

Despite threatening rain clouds, 16 hardy ANats came out to explore Denman Island May 29. We had a spectacular day walking three different sites. At Boyle Point Park, we were very surprised to see the eagles had rebuilt their nest closer to the viewpoint. We enjoyed lunch at the beach and a nice walk through Central Park.

On a beautiful sunny, warm day (June 8) a dozen or so people set off to do the Steve's Loop walk in Whiskey Creek. We enjoyed the contrast of the lower, damp forest, full of Sitka spruce and hemlock, not to mention skunk cabbage and deer fern, with the drier hill portion where non-photosynthetic, parasitic plants such as pinesap, candysticks and groundcones abound.

We still have more to come before summer break:

- June 19th a loop around Loon Lake (near Port Alberni) and
- June 29th Paradise Meadows on Mount Washington.

Get out and enjoy the fresh air, whatever the weather.

A note for members: For the last year Outings have been organized by seven members of ANats – the 7 Amigos. They have agreed to do it for another year but would REALLY APPRECIATE more input from members in September.



Feb 17-Somass River Estuary



Mar 23-Collier Dam & Falls



Apr 3-Jack Point/Biggs Park



Apr 24-Chinook Forest, Trent River



May 29-Denman Island



Jun 8-Steves Loop

CBC RADIO, NORTH BY NORTHWEST – POLLINATORS

Listen to segments already broadcast: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-43-north-by-northwest>

Jun 1, 2024: Pollinators – Kele Fleming – song “Vanishing of Bees”

Jun 9, 2024: Pollinators – Elaine Humphrey – microscopy pollen puzzle

Jun 15, 2024: Pollinators – Bonnie Zand – lesser known bees of BC – Native Bee Society of BC

POLLINATOR PATHWAY UPDATE

Rosemary Taylor

For five years now, a small group of Arrowsmith Naturalists has been working to raise awareness of the decline in the insect population upon which our food, and the food of much of the entire ecosystem, depends.

We attend environmental “Open House” events, wherever there is an opportunity. We participated in the Brant Wildlife Children’s Festival, organized at Arrowview Elementary School during the Brant Festival, and in The River Never Sleeps Festival at Rosewall Creek Hatchery.

To recognize the regularly celebrated [2024 Pollinator Week](#) (June 17-23), we have booked tables at both Errington Farmers Market on **17th June** and Qualicum Beach Farmers Market on **June 22nd**. We will also be at St. Andrew’s Lodge Festival on 27th July.

Wherever possible, we involve people of all ages in conversations about the need to provide food, shelter and habitat for the many insects on which we depend—we also hand out bookmarks with information about bees and “No Mow May” for handy reference.

The term “No Mow May” is just a catchy phrase that’s misinterpreted in many ways. It’s simply a concept encouraging owners of grassy areas not to mow until the ‘weeds’ such as dandelion, daisy and clover have died down. These plants are early sources of nectar for native bees coming out of hibernation, and blooming time may vary, depending on where one lives. Once these (and other flowers such as snowdrops, crocus or scilla that might be planted in the grass) have finished, by all means mow the grass if necessary, but keep it a bit longer than normal as it will still provide habitat for some insects.

Now the next step is to get action. Most people are aware of the need to include pollinator plants of all kinds in their gardens. They may not be aware that our native bumblebees (and others) need some “stepping stones” to feed them as they travel across the gaps between gardens, such as the grassy areas beyond property lines that offer nothing in the way of sustenance.

What is needed now is the idea of planting a few native plants by individuals or a group of neighbours—beside pedestrian pathways or in any small, unused patches of earth that are not likely to be mowed, or trodden on by dogs or people. Pollinator pathways between gardens will provide nectar and pollen, and may eventually connect up to create meaningful areas appreciated, not only by bees and other pollinators, but also by adding much to the ambience of the area in which we live.



MORE POLLINATOR NEWS...

contributed by Tom Whitfield

In celebration of Earth Day, April 22, 2024, a Pollinator Pathway consisting of native flowering plants, seeds and shrubs was built and planted by volunteers along Hoylake Rd West. As the plants begin to grow and flower, the new pathway garden will provide an appealing natural habitat for bees, insects and birds along this well-used walking trail (near the entrance to the Grandon Creek trail). The hope is that this Pollinator Pathway will promote community awareness about biodiversity and ecosystem health, stimulate conversation and a sense of well-being among neighbours to further a culture of conservation.



Photo by Rosemary Taylor

This Earth Day initiative involved kindergarteners, along with their teacher Kayla Mohr from Qualicum Beach Elementary School, who dropped by on Earth Day to scatter native flower seeds. Funding was provided by the Parksville-Qualicum Foundation through the Small Neighbourhood Grant program. Plants were provided by Streamside Native Plant Nursery with seeds donated by West Coast Seeds.

The project was organized by Tom Whitfield with volunteers from various local conservation groups including the Brown Property Preservation Society, Streamkeepers and Arrowsmith Naturalists.

THE KIDS ARE BACK!

Sylvia Riessner

A new [Nature Kids](#) program is coming to Qualicum Beach—thanks to local nature explorer and environmental advocate, Ray Woroniak. Ray is very active with youth-related experiential education in our community, serving as President for the Qualicum School District's Parent Advisory Councils and facilitating youth-focused outreach with various nature-related groups and for special events. As a Vancouver Island University Program Officer for the UNESCO designated MABR, you may also find him working at the little yellow house ts'Xelikwshenawtxw (124 West Second Ave, Qualicum Beach.)

Ray stepped forward to re-start the Nature Kids program in our area because he likes to encourage children to “to be curious about nature and to think more about it.” He has a seemingly endless supply of intriguing ideas to encourage exploration and enjoyment of nature. By the time this newsletter is published, Ray will be inviting families with children 5-12 years of age to join him in Nature Kids activities. The well-known Nature Kids program is focused on helping children and families to “explore, play, learn about and take action for nature.”

A NEW RESIDENT COMING SOON – SUBTERRANEAN CLOVER

Terry Taylor

There is a little clover that you have probably never seen, but that you are likely to see quite often in the coming years. It is the subterranean clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*).

I first saw some at Crofton about 5 years ago. The first population that I found in our area was in Parksville about two years ago, but at that time I did not see any other sites around Parksville or Qualicum Beach. However, it now seems to be taking up residence with a vengeance. At the beginning of May, while walking around Qualicum Beach, I saw it in four different locations, one of which is beside our mail boxes. Since it is not a large showy plant, there will probably be many other places where it is now growing.

Like the white clover (*T. repens*), it grows in lawns. Unlike white clover, however, it is an annual, and a literature search indicates that it is self-pollinated and probably does very little to support pollinating insects.



Photograph by Rosemary Taylor

Subterranean Clover (cont'd)

It has the typical three leaflets of clovers, but forms a dense clump, so the white clover leaves are spread out and are not as conspicuous. Each cluster of white flowers contains only about four individual flowers. As you are walking across your lawn, and see a thick clump of overlapping leaves with little white specks within it, you are probably seeing a subterranean clover patch.

Subterranean clover is unusual for the way its seeds are produced. Some of the seed cases grow into burrs which then grow into the soil. No other clover is self-planting like this, hence the name— subterranean clover. Maybe this is the reason it can form such compact patches.

It is native to Europe but has been introduced across the world because of its agricultural value. Like other clovers it fixes nitrogen, and so, increases soil fertility, and has been used as fodder for cattle.

The [Illustrated Flora of British Columbia](#) that was published in 1999 gives its provincial range as infrequent on southeastern Vancouver Island. All the photos on E-Flora are from the Victoria area. My walk in Qualicum Beach would seem to indicate that it is establishing rapidly, and is no longer infrequent.

Is it a problem? If you like a nice weed-free lawn that has only grass, then you are probably not very happy with its arrival. If you do not mind a messy lawn, whose fertility is being maintained by it, you are probably okay with it. However, there could be a problem if it establishes in Garry oak habitats. It would then compete with native annual plants. These sites are low in soil nutrition. Our native annuals are adapted to that. Increasing soil fertility in such areas favors the growth of introduced weeds that can then out-compete native plants.

NEWS FROM FRIENDS OF SHELLY CREEK PARK

Sue Wilson

Here are a couple of volunteers (Helen and Yana) at Shelly Creek Park removing lamium (Yellow Archangel). We started in June 2022 and the difference is amazing. Native plants such as thimbleberry now have room to grow.

There will be more work parties in the coming months. If you would like to help, or would just enjoy the photos and updates, please email Sue Wilson at: friendsofshellycreekpark@gmail.com.



Lamium, Eric Hunt, CC BY-NC-ND

Shelly Creek Park is a small, but lovely, natural refuge in Parksville (266 Hamilton Avenue is the official address.)

Thank you Yana and Helen!



Encounters with Nature

Teri Hitch

Thinking about my memories of swimming in the ocean...I remembered an encounter I had with a young seal, while swimming, several years ago.

Dressed in my black wetsuit and gear (including fins), I took a rest from my swimming. Up popped a seal pup beside me. If seals can have a look of delight on their faces, she did, as she looked into my eyes.

She leaned back to show me her fins, and looked at me, as if to smile. Then I mimicked her, leaning back to show her mine, and looking into her eyes, with a big grin. She loved seeing my big funny fins. The pup and I went back and forth looking at our respective fins, and "giggling" about our different fins.

We played our game of "show me your fin and I'll show you mine", for the next 3 days! (Somehow, she would find me.) On the third day, her mother popped up beside us, and was not happy about her offspring playing a game with a humanoid. Quickly, they disappeared into the depths of the Salish Sea.

I never saw my finned-playmate again. But, I will always remember this delightful experience of cross-species play, with a finned wee one.



One reason to love the
Englishman River Estuary

by *Sue Wilson*

Last Minute Notes

- Final vote tally: 52 votes (all YES!) Arrowsmith Naturalists will donate (before the June 30 deadline) to help Nature Trust reach its goal and purchase (and protect) protect 13 acres (5.2 hectares) of precious wildlife habitat along the Kw'a'luxw (Englishman) River at 130 Shelly Road.
- Nature Kids update: Ray Woroniak reports that he has 44 families lined up. Initial meetings are set for June 26 and 29 at Seaside Nature Park.
- A final reminder that the ANats picnic is set for Thursday, July 18, start time: 4 pm – bring your own food (and a chair). Note: If we're lucky, Sally will have more challenging collective nouns for us to enjoy!
- Keep an eye out for future calls for watering assistance for the French Creek Estuary restoration plantings. Plans are underway to install a water storage tank and connections to allow volunteers to water the hundreds of plants and native trees and shrubs planted earlier this year.
- More details about Pollinator Week events: Rosemary Taylor and Liz Thorne will be at the Qualicum Beach Market on Saturday, June 22 – look for their information table and pollinator-friendly plants
- Ray Woroniak sent an email to let people know that ANats has a Pollinator Week display at the new MABR Info Centre in Qualicum Beach (Leigh House). The Centre will be open 10 am to 2 pm Thursday, June 20 to Saturday, June 22. Enjoy!
- Lynne Brookes (Special Projects) reported that 23 international post-graduate students visited for six weeks recently, under the tutelage of MABR. They came to learn about invasive species and had the opportunity to connect with local First Nations, Broombusters, French Creek Estuary Nature Preserve, the Englishman River Estuary, and the North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre. In mid-June, the students will present their papers at a public event at Vancouver Island University.

Enjoy your summer ! See you at the picnic...Sylvia