

Wild Species Protected at Salish View

By: Carrina Maslovat and Laura Matthias

In addition to offering spectacular views of the Salish Sea, the new Salish View Nature Reserve is home to a diversity of wild species. Lasqueti Island's newest protected area is an 11.5 hectare (28 acre) piece of paradise on the southeast corner of the island.

From July 8-10th, three biologists, Laura Matthias, Ryan Batten and Carrina Maslovat, surveyed the reserve for rare species. We set up minnow traps to survey for amphibians and installed an acoustic bat detector to record which bat species were found in the reserve. Luckily, recent rains made the identification of lichens and mosses easier than expected.



We found the reserve is home to rare Northern Red-legged Frogs (*Rana aurora*) as well as Northern Pacific Treefrog (*Pseudacris regilla*) and Common Gartersnake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*). Five different bat species were detected: Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), California Myotis (*Myotis californicus*), Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*), Western Long-eared Myotis (*Myotis evotis*) and Yuma Myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*). Little Brown Myotis is federally listed as Endangered. All of these bat species use the small dug pond on the property as part of their habitat where they consume large quantities of insects over the water.

We also heard Common Nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*) feeding and an Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) calling and found an eggshell from a hatched Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) chick.

Above: Salish View,
Left: Laura Matthias checks a minnow trap in the dug pond. Note Northern Red-legged frog on top of trap. Photo: C. Maslovat

One of the most interesting finds was a very large occurrence of batwing vinyl (*Leptogium platynum*), scattered in 14 patches throughout the reserve. This leafy “jellyskin” lichen is federally listed as Endangered and is protected under the Species at Risk Act. It has medium-sized leafy lobes with a dark bluish upper surface and usually has many small fruiting bodies. It is unusual among lichens because it also has small lobules that detach for vegetative reproduction. It is extremely slow growing and if it isn’t disturbed, it can persist for a long time at a given site.

Batwing vinyl is found in western North America from southern California to southern BC. In BC it occurs at low elevations throughout the Gulf Islands, southeastern Vancouver Island, and at one location on the mainland. It grows on calcium and magnesium-rich rocks that have a high pH in sites with periodic spring seepage. Although only three locations in Canada were known in 2011, recent surveys have brought the total number up to 18 sites including the recent discovery at Salish View.

Lichens have an important place in biology. In 1868, a Swiss botanist named Simon Schwendener revealed that lichens are actually a mutually beneficial partnership between a fungus and microscopic alga: the algae use sunlight to make food for the fungus and the fungus provide minerals, water and shelter for the alga. Because lichens are made from two organisms, they can’t reproduce as a single thing: each partner has to reproduce separately and then find the other in order to make a new lichen. Interestingly, in the 150 years since the two components were discovered, scientists have not been able



Biologist Ryan Batten looks at Batwing Vinyl (*Leptogium platynum*) on a rock face in Salish View. Right: Batwing Vinyl **Photos: C. Maslovat**

to put a fungus and alga together to recreate a lichen. Exciting recent research has found that lichens actually have a third partner which is a single celled yeast embedded in the “skin” of the lichen, so it may now be possible to put the components together. How they find each other in the wild remains a mystery.

The Ecological Gifts Program of Environment and Climate Change Canada generously funded the Species at Risk surveys. Understanding which species are present will help the Islands Trust Conservancy manage the reserve effectively to protect these rare and interesting species. Thanks to the many generous donors, former landholder Wayne Bright, the Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy, the Ecological Gifts Program and the Islands Trust Conservancy for their support for the acquisition of Salish View.

Your support for the mission and work of the Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy (LINC) is much appreciated.



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Native and Invasive Plants found on Lasqueti



Bigleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)

As autumn changes to winter, the bigleaf maples display one of nature's outstanding seasonal reflections. Gardeners love to collect these giant leaves as cover over their winter beds. The Western screech owl also likes to use it as a nesting tree.

Acer macrophyllum, the bigleaf maple is a large deciduous tree in the genus *Acer*. Smaller leaved maples are found in the east. The bigleaf maple can grow from 90 to 157.80 feet tall. Native to western North America, it is mostly found near the Pacific coast, primarily in southern BC, Washington and Oregon.

Shade-intolerant, bigleaf maples occur in maritime to subarctic cool mesothermal climates on fresh to very moist, nitrogen-rich soils. Common in pure or mixed-species stands, it likes wet areas, stream edges and alluvial areas (where clay, gravel, sand or silt has been deposited by flowing water.) This fast-growing tree regenerates abundantly from stump sprouts in clearings, thus hindering regeneration and growth of conifers. Its calcium-rich bark supports well developed corticolous moss communities. (E-Flora BC)

Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)

Native to southeast Europe and Asia, *Canada* thistle was likely introduced in the 1700s as a contaminant of crop seed. These large and invasive plants are found on Lasqueti, especially along roadsides, cultivated fields, pastures, logged areas, riverbanks, and other disturbed areas. The Canada thistle is considered a Noxious Weed, under the BC Weed Control Act, as it replaces native grasses and reduces crop yields and productivity.

"Canada thistle has purple or white flowers, with stalkless, spiny, dark-green leaves, growing to 0.3-2 metres in height at maturity. Canada thistle spreads rapidly through horizontal roots that give rise to large infestation patches nearby and out-competing native plants. Canada thistle develops seeds ... may produce 1,000 to 1,500 seeds per flowering shoot. Best adapted to rich, heavy loam, clay loam, and sandy loam, it grows poorly in shaded conditions, can tolerate saline, wet, or dry soils, but does not tolerate waterlogged or poorly aerated soil. Dispersed primarily by wind, seeds can also be dispersed by water, animals, clothing, equipment, and vehicles." (Invasive Species Council of BC)



Bigleaf: G. Scott
left: Canadian thistle in flower,
photo L Scott,
 below: Can thistle forming seeds
photo J Leekie
 all photos from the
 Invasive Species
 Council of BC



Bats and their Houses - *Sheila Ray*

Nine species of bats are known to live on Vancouver Island, and probably on Lasqueti. We know now that at least five species of bats have been detected on the Salish View property. These five species are known to use bat houses. So should you put up a bat house to encourage them to your yard?

There are still many unknowns concerning bat houses, but it seems that bat houses are most successful when they are used to assist with bat evictions. If you already have bats roosting under shakes or in an attic, and you are making it so they can no longer access that roost, it makes sense to provide them with a bat house. There are many different designs, so before you build or buy and install a bat house check this web site to ensure that it is appropriate for the type situation you have. <https://bcbats.ca/index.php/bat-houses/bat-house-designs>

Female bats roost in large groups, called maternity colonies, to bear and raise their pups. There may be several hundred bats in one colony. They may roost in tree cavities, under bark, in rock crevices, under shingles or in attics. Males are more solitary, although little is known about what males do in summer. In winter bats hibernate in caves, mines or deep rock crevices. Some, like the Hoary Bat migrate. Bats are probably not going to abandon these roosting sites to move into a bat house unless they can no longer use the site. If you do put up a bat house share your results with info@bcbats.ca. There is still much to learn about what makes a bat house successful or not.

Special Guest Nov 16th on Lasqueti

Barb Beasley: coastal ecologist (Ucluelet) founder of the Association of Wetland Stewards for Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds, a non-profit organization that promotes habitat stewardship for amphibians, and author of COSEWIC status reports and management plans for the Northern Red-legged Frog and Wandering Salamander.
Learn about the diversity of amphibians in coastal B.C., why they are important for ourselves and the planet & what's being done to help them survive.

**Saturday, November 16th
Location: hike at 1 (tba)
Presentation at 4:30 Arts Centre**

Seen In Passing



Left: Northwestern alligator lizard, **Photo:** Larry Woodrow

Lower left: Donor points to his name on the Salish View thank you poster **Below:** feral goat on Jedediah Island **Photos:** Sheila Harrington



Christmas Bird Count: December 30th, 2019

Join the Count. Call count leader, Marti or Sheila Ray 8884 to find out if anyone needs a count mate, to confirm where you are counting, or to get the latest count lists.

Join the community count and potluck dinner at Marti's place: call 333-8879



Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy

We welcome photos for the Seen in Passing section.

Board of Directors: Sheila Ray, Wendy Schneible, Gordon Scott, Barb Brooks, Hilary Duinker, Jordan Barton, Aigul Kukolj, Ken Lertzman
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Squitty Bay Day 2019

Celebration of Salish View Nature Reserve

The sun was shining. The skies were clear. The food was sumptuous. The crowds were smiling. Squitty Bay Day 2019 featured the dedication of the new Salish View Nature Reserve. We welcomed our special guests, Kate Emmings of the Islands Trust Conservancy and David Cunningham, of Environment and Climate Change Canada. Following the hikes to the many viewpoints of Salish View, tours along the crenulated coastline, a quiet herb walk, and swimming in the bay, friends met friends, while the Makeke Marimba band was grooving. Locals and visitors from near and far congregated to celebrate the successful creation of the new Salish View Nature Reserve. What a grand day!



Thanks to all who came out to celebrate Squitty Bay Day and our protected lands on Lasqueti: Jane, Kathy, Aigul, Wendy, Sheila and the rest of the food crew, the intrepid tour leaders James Swartz, Jessica Slavik, Jordan and Gordon, and the awesome Makeke Marimba band making sweet music. Thanks to all who joined in to honour the protection of nature in our corner of this beautiful world.

Special thanks to all the generous donors, partners and supporters who helped bring the Salish View Nature Reserve to fruition: the willing landowner who donated 20% of the appraised value, the 150 individual donors, Islands Trust Conservancy who partnered with us on the acquisition and will own and manage it, the Nanaimo and Area Land Trust who share with LINC the conservation covenant that ensures local oversight, the LINC Board of Directors past and present who supported and worked so hard to see this project succeed, Environment and Climate Change Canada who paid for the surveys, the generous Clayden Family and the Sitka Foundation.

Together we raised \$250,000 in eighteen months to conserve this very special 28 acres of habitat containing cliffs, ponds, new and old forests and oceanic views. Salish View is natural habitat for rare and sensitive plants, animals, birds and lichens. In the face of onrushing changing climate, this local conservation effort shows that even a small community like Lasqueti can mobilize the will to make a difference. Big thanks to all!



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Thank you everyone for your donations

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