



BURKE MOUNTAIN NATURALISTS

Promoting Nature Awareness in Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody and beyond

Membership Renewal - time to renew your BMN Membership for 2026

<https://www.burkemountainnaturalists.ca/membership/>

Annual AGM Report

By Edie Kernighan

We ended 2025 on a high note this year! Our AGM was a success, featuring the Year in Review and Election of Officers, as well as our fundraising events. Through the book and bake sales, 50/50 draw, and silent auction, we raised \$2,600 this year! Thank you to everyone who volunteered, donated items, and bought books, baked goodies and silent auction items – and attended the event. Partial funds will go to the Riverview Horticultural Centre Society this year. Much appreciation to all the RHCS members' contributions to the fundraisers and to the staff of Como Lake United Church for always helping to make our in-person meetings a success.

The Financial Report for our fiscal year ending August 31, 2025 is included below (page 5). If anyone has questions or suggestions, please email burkemtnnats@gmail.com. Be sure to check out our website for upcoming events.

Happy New Year!

January BMN Club Meeting

Wrap-Up of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Tues Jan 20

7:30pm – 8:30pm

Presented by John Reynolds
(via Zoom)

IN THE NEWS

Two items of interest to anyone fascinated by the ancient Sumas Lake:

CBC News | Can the answer to future flooding be found in resurrecting an ancient lake?

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/sumas-lake-flooding-9.7026967>

A 15-minute video on YouTube (starts after ad):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLghIFg-GWM>

CALL TO ACTION:

BC Nature is asking for support regarding opposition to a BC provincial bill, Bill M216, the Professional Reliance Act.

“Bill M216 would allow development decisions to flow through a single hired professional, paid by the proponents themselves — without municipal environmental review or independent verification”.

Please refer to this link for background information and a response letter template, and if you agree, please submit your letter before the **deadline of 3pm on January 6, 2026:**

<https://bcnature.org/bc-nature-stance-on-bill-m216-professional-reliance-act/>

Alternatively, you can use this web portal link to send a letter to local councils if you wish:

<https://consultation-portal.leg.bc.ca/consultations/154>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Free Community Workshop: ‘Explore Our Forests’ at Mossom Hatchery

Sun Jan 11, 12:30pm – 1:30pm

This is the first of a new series of community workshops and seminars at the Mossom Creek Hatchery & Education Centre. Guided by Mossom interpreter Shelley Frick, participants will explore the forest surrounding Mossom Creek and learn about nutrient cycling, ecological processes, key species in our forests, and the ways these ecosystems influence our daily lives.

If you're new to Mossom, feel free to join the Salmon-Sunday open house beforehand (11:00am – 12:30pm) to explore the hatchery and education centre, learn about fish husbandry, help out with odd jobs, and more!

This workshop is for all ages and is free, but registration is required. Parking is also free and doors open at 12:15pm. Location: 12 Mossom Creek Drive, Port Moody (go through the gate, follow gravel access road uphill to the end). Click [here](#) to reserve your spot.

NOTE - In the event of inclement weather, this event will be postponed to a later date.

BMN CLUB MEETING: 'Wrap-Up of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count'

Presented by John Reynolds (via Zoom)

Tues Jan 20, 7:30pm – 8:30pm

This will be a presentation that summarizes the local Christmas Bird Count (held on January 3). We'll hear the highlights of this year's Count – what birds were seen, and where and how many were seen. There's friendly competition between teams of birders, and the wrap-up evening is always fun. Back by popular demand is presenter John Reynolds. Also, at this meeting will be the judging of the photography contest that accompanies our Christmas Bird Count.

BMN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: Water Quality Monitoring Projects

Sun Jan 25, 9am – 10am

The usual day for these sessions is the last Sunday of the month, but the date is weather dependent. Check with the leaders for meeting places, dates and times. New volunteers are welcome! Monthly monitoring is done concurrently at two locations:

Como Lake contact – [Liz Thunstrom](#).

Lost Lake and Mundy Lake in Mundy Park contacts – [Chris & Evelyn Thomson](#).

Free Workshop: 'Herbal Tea Workshop – Using Invasive Plants' at Douglas College

Mon Jan 26, 5pm – 6pm

Weeds often get a bad rap but can be beneficial for the health of our urban ecosystem and for us. Learn about common weeds that can be used to make delicious, nutritious herbal teas. You'll get to make your own tea bags to take home.

Held at Douglas College, Coquitlam Campus (1250 Pinetree Way).

This is an inclusive, free event, but registration is required. Click [here](#) to register or register via email: ue@douglascollege.ca.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: BMN Bird Nest Box Cleaning and Maintenance

Dates to be announced.

The dates will be announced shortly for this annual foray into Colony Farm (Ḳéxətəm), Minnekhada, and Widgeon Regional Parks, and DeBoville Slough. We usually split the work over 3 mornings in late February/early March. Notice will be put on our website and sent via email to BMN members.

See the [BMN website](#) for more events!

Nature Watch

By Liz Thunstrom

Send your nature sightings to Liz at: elizabeththunstrom@telus.net

Best wishes to everyone for another great year enjoying being in Nature! It always has surprises for us!

Yet another rare bird has shown up in the Lower Mainland. This time it is a tiny Taiga Flycatcher, which summers in northern Russia and winters in Southeastern Asia. This little grey bird was spotted actively looking for insects and worms near Sunset Beach in Vancouver! Like the Little Blue Heron, it apparently is quite unafraid around people. I wonder what birds will turn up next? Be sure to keep your eyes open on walks and report anything unusual to iNaturalist.

Como Lake has been fairly quiet, except for flocks of Canada Geese coming and going to graze on the grass. Last week I saw two Common Mergansers and a Bufflehead actively fishing there too. This is a good time to be outside as the birds are easier to spot through bare branches.

The Christmas Bird Count on January 3 may turn up some unusual birds. Be sure to attend the January meeting to find out!

Tales from the Trail – Falcon Fury

Date of Survey: December 17, 2025

Ḳéxətəm Regional Park (formerly Colony Farm)

By John Saremba

Taking advantage of the break in the recent rainy weather, I conducted a solo mid-week bird survey at the park. Today's route was a round-trip walk where I began at the east end of the Perimeter Trail, walked clockwise along this trail, and then headed south from the Mundy Creek parking lot back to the Community Garden parking lot. Consequently, this route altered the typical sequence and description of my observations. Highlights from this bird survey are presented as follows.

Just after leaving the Community Gardens parking lot, I was somewhat surprised not to see the Great Blue Heron which typically perches in the tall deciduous tree at the intersection with the access road to the Forensic Hospital site. Perhaps with the clear, sunny conditions the heron was busy foraging elsewhere rather than resting at this perch.

Station 4 proved rather quiet in terms of bird activity, with only a few American Crows, a boisterous Song Sparrow, and two Golden-crowned Sparrows. A few Dark-eyed Juncos and a pair of Black-capped Chickadees made their presence known at some distance from the point count site. Two gulls also passed by overhead as I headed to the next station. Just as I started to leave this area, it was a treat to see a pair of Belted Kingfishers fly by overhead.

At Station 3, the wetlands on either side of the access road contained even higher water levels than a few weeks ago. Once again, despite the sunny weather, only several American Crows, several Mallards, and a few songbirds were observed at this site. These songbirds included two Golden-crowned Sparrows, a Spotted Towhee, and a Song Sparrow.



View at east side of wetland at Station 3. Photo: John Saremba

Over the past several years, we have come to expect the interesting foraging habits of this Station's "resident" Song Sparrow. This sparrow appears to be quite comfortable foraging for seeds at the base of the plants partially submerged in the wetlands. Song Sparrows are omnivorous, so depending on the time of year they will seek seeds, grain, insects and other invertebrates, and berries. Song Sparrows eat many insects and other invertebrates in the summer, as well as seeds and fruits all year round.



Song Sparrow foraging for seeds in wetland. Photo: John Saremba

At this point of survey, I found it rather odd that the bird activity was rather sparse particularly among the songbird species. I had expected more action given the break in the recent very wet weather. However, it was at Station 1 that I realized one of the possible reasons for this inactivity. Read on to find out why.

At Station 2 by the Metro Vancouver works yard, a trio of Northern Flickers were actively flittering among the branches of several nearby tall deciduous trees. Their frolicking included some swaying and showing off of tailfeathers. Northern Flickers can use wing-flashing behaviour to attract mates or defend their territory. Other birds at this station included a couple of House Finches, a Spotted Towhee, and a Song Sparrow.

It was at Station 1 that I found possible evidence of why the songbird activity seemed relatively quiet. It was here that I had the first of several bird of prey sightings with a very brief glimpse of a Cooper's Hawk in the distance followed by the appearance of a Red-tailed Hawk that flew by and then perched on a nearby tall tree.

Both these birds were seen later at other locations in the old field as I traversed the trails. The presence and active hunting by such birds could have accounted for the songbirds not willing to make an appearance, particularly with such clear weather conditions.



Red-tailed Hawk on the alert for possible prey. Photo: John Saremba

The identification of a Cooper's Hawk versus a Sharp-shinned Hawk can prove challenging. I have found the following online identification guide for these two hawks quite useful: <https://feederwatch.org/learn/tricky-bird-ids/sharp-shinned-hawk-and-coopers-hawk/>. In my case, the following characteristics suggested that it was indeed a Cooper's Hawk: a tail that is rounded at the tip rather than a square tip with prominent corners; middle tail feathers being the longest, tail feathers that have a clear white tip, feathers on the back of the head that are often raised and give the bird a crested look, eyes seem to be close to the front of the head, and a thick tubular body shape versus a broad chest and narrow hips.



Cooper's Hawk perched on a utility line. Photo: John Saremba

At this point, from Station 1 I turned and walked north along the south to north section of the Perimeter Trail. This route traverses the former staging right-of-way used during the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

Observations along the south to north section of the Perimeter trail included several American Crows, at least five Song Sparrows, a couple of Spotted Towhees, and several Black-capped Chickadees.

As I approached the north end of the Perimeter Trail, I was able to see one of the Red-tailed Hawks sitting very low in its nest on the transmission tower adjacent to Lougheed Highway. Since these birds typically mate and tend to their nest in spring, perhaps this hawk was using its nest to safely perch in a comfortable and familiar spot.



Red-tailed Hawk perched in its nest on transmission tower. Photo: John Saremba

And it was a pleasant surprise to then spot an American Kestrel perched on the top of a small shrub close to the Mundy Creek parking lot. As it turns out, this would not be the last time that I saw this little falcon species.

Walking up to Station 7, I was fascinated by the sudden appearance of the American Kestrel, which took exception to a Red-tailed Hawk cruising by in the vicinity of the kestrel's hunting area. The kestrel's very aggressive and determined response in trying to chase off the

Red-tail was very unexpected, particularly given that the hawk is at least four times the size of the kestrel.



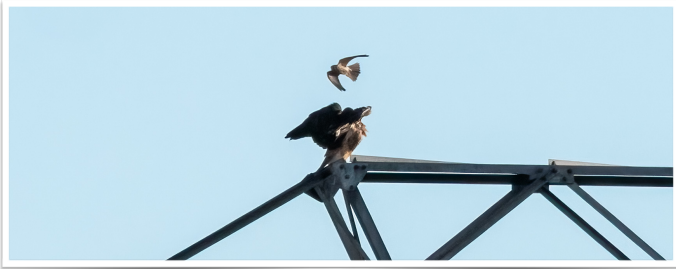
American Kestrel in pursuit of a much bigger Red-tailed Hawk. Photo: John Saremba

Over the next five to seven minutes, the kestrel pursued the hawk in an aerial dogfight style attack. It seems, according to online birding comments, that kestrels are known to attack larger raptors such as Red-tailed Hawks to aggressively chase them out of their territory.



American Kestrel in pursuit of Red-tailed Hawk. Photo: John Saremba

Indeed, this one took exception to the appearance of this hawk and decided to dive-bomb the hawk as it tried to fly to its usual perch in a transmission tower just northeast of Station 7. Even when the hawk landed on the tower, the small, feisty kestrel continued to harass the hawk by flying by it a number of times. And several times, the kestrel used its talons to try and grab the head of the much larger and probably thoroughly annoyed Red-tailed Hawk.



American Kestrel harassing a Red-tailed Hawk perched on transmission tower. Photo: John Saremba

The kestrel then decided to continue hunting in an area south of this tower which likely allowed the hawk to briefly relax a little.



Peace at last for the Red-tailed Hawk. Photo: John Saremba

I wanted to share some information that I researched about American Kestrels. They are known as North America's smallest, most colorful, and aggressive falcons. Kestrels typically inhabit open areas covered by short ground vegetation where they hunt mostly from perches, frequently from utility wires along roadside areas.

They can hunt prey by hovering in search of food, especially when suitable perches are lacking. When hovering, kestrels face into the wind with their tail constantly adjusting to changes in the breeze. The American Kestrel is the only North American falcon to habitually hover with rapid wing beats, keeping its head motionless while scanning the ground for prey. This hovering behaviour is called "kiting." During past bird surveys, we have had the pleasure of seeing both such foraging characteristics displayed by kestrels.

Kestrels feed on arthropods and small vertebrates, usually capturing these on the ground, although some individuals become proficient at capturing insects and small birds in flight. The kestrel is attracted to human-modified habitats, such as pastures and parkland, and often is found near areas of human activity, including some heavily developed urban areas.

This small but feisty bird is one of the most colorful of all raptors. A male kestrel has a slate-blue head and wings that contrast elegantly with his rusty-red back and tail. The female has the same warm reddish on her wings, back, and tail. She is all red-brown above with narrow dark bars, including on tail. The male kestrel has a red-brown tail with black tip and a red-brown back contrasting with blue-gray wings.

Although they have a feisty attitude, life can be challenging for kestrels because they can end up as prey for larger birds such as Red-tailed Hawks, Barn Owls, American Crows, and Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. To help avoid becoming prey themselves, kestrels have dark markings on the back of their heads that look like false eyes, which are thought to confuse larger predators.

A kestrel has a secret weapon when it comes to searching for voles. Unlike humans, birds can see ultraviolet light. This enables kestrels to make out the trails of urine that voles, a common prey mammal, leave as they run along the ground. Like neon dinner signs, these bright paths may highlight the way to a meal. Little wonder, kestrels are frequent visitors to forage in the old field habitat at Colony Farm.

The reliance of kestrels and other raptors on voles and other prey in old field habitat speaks volumes to the need to retain such landscape features.

While at Station 6, I again had the pleasure of seeing the American Kestrel spend time hunting and sitting on various perches in the old field. As in the past, the kestrel perched on the top of posts with bird nest boxes, as well as the old fence posts traversing



American Kestrel perched on the post in the west side old field. Photo: John Saremba

the old field near this site. So again, it was not surprising that I was unable to detect much in the way of songbird activity at this station, particularly given the little falcon's search for prey in this area.

At Station 5, the American Kestrel took a break from foraging over the old field and flew nearby to land on a utility line, which is another favorite location to survey the area. I managed to get a photo of this falcon using its tail feathers likely as an air brake when landing on the line. And this kestrel did look somewhat dishevelled, likely as a result of its recent encounter with the Red-tailed Hawk.



American Kestrel braking to land on the utility line. Photo: John Saremba



American Kestrel looking somewhat dishevelled. Photo: John Saremba

Other bird observations at Station 5 included a Song sparrow, a Spotted Towhee, and a pair of Mallards which flew by in the distance.

While walking along the trail from Station 7 to 5, I encountered another rather unusual observation with four voles who appeared to jump from the side of the trail into the water-laden grassy area of the old field. Given the water-saturated condition of the field, it is likely that these voles were resting in the drier section of the trail and then tried to hide as I walked by.

So that concludes another morning on the trail. During this walk, I certainly gained a much better appreciation of the tenacity and courage of American kestrels.

Financial Report

Annual Statements 2025, as of August 31, 2025

Statement of Activities

Revenue

Nature Canada Grant -WTF	\$1,700.00
Membership Fees	\$5,369.00
BC Nature Magazine	-\$40.00
Donations	\$1,285.82
Refreshments	\$43.15
Club Caps & Tshirts	\$125.00
Fund Raiser	\$1,130.80
Bat Conservation Income	\$105.00
	\$9,718.77

Expenses

General Expenses	\$171.99
BC Nature Dues	\$2,640.00
Liability Insurance	\$496.50
Nature Canada Grant - WTF ex	\$1,413.13
PO Box	\$191.68
Hall Rental	\$1,000.00
Dues, Subscriptions, Other (QE)	\$40.00
Donations to Other Organizati	\$1,400.00
Website Expenses	\$115.98
Honorariums to Speakers	\$300.00
PayPal Fees	\$35.68
Newsletter Printing	\$245.60
Printing - Posters/Brochures	\$198.21
Postage	\$94.90
Bat Program Expenses	262.17
Water Monitoring Project	-20.07
Tech Expenses	\$250.00
E-Transfer Service Charges	\$31.50
	\$8,867.27

NET INCOME: \$851.50

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Vancity Account	\$7,990.39
Vancity Shares	\$96.01
Term Deposit	\$10,000.00
	\$18,086.40

NET ASSETS: \$18,086.40

Welcome to New Members

By Brian Wormald

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members to the club. Please look out for them at the next meeting or hike and extend your own personal welcome.

Port Moody:

- Joanna Boyd
- Pam Hosfield

Coquitlam:

- Craig Hodge

Burke Mountain Naturalists Membership (JANUARY TO DECEMBER)

\$33 for an individual \$40 for a Family Membership

NEW! Post-Secondary Student Membership — \$10

Please email BurkeMtnNats@gmail.com for more information on our Student Membership option. We want to hear from you!

Our activities include:

- hiking
- bird watching and surveys
- invasive plant removal parties
- bat monitoring and conservation field trips
- nature walks
- attending local environmental/community events with informative displays
- monthly public meetings, except over the summer, with a guest speaker (most invited presentations are available on our [YouTube channel](#))
- publishing 10 monthly digital newsletters (except over the summer)
- BC Nature quarterly magazine, Nature BC.



Please check our [Events Calendar](#) to see what's coming up!

MEMBERSHIP BE PURCHASED/RENEWED:

- Online at: <https://www.burkemountainnaturalists.ca/membership/>
- using Interac®, a credit card or PayPal®, under the tab named "Get Involved".
- Mail a cheque to BMN, P.O. Box 52540, R.P.O. Coquitlam Centre, Coquitlam, BC V3B 7J4

If you are contemplating switching to "electronic" payment, we urge you to use eTransfer in preference to PayPal. It's easier AND saves your club money. There are NO charges incurred for you OR the club for these bank transfers.

BMN is a registered non-profit society with charitable income status.

Name(s): _____
(Family adults at the same address)

Name(s): _____
(Family children under 19)

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

DEADLINE for the next BMN Newsletter

Saturday, January 31, 2026

Send articles to: bmnewsletter@gmail.com

The Burke Mountain Naturalists was formed in January 1989 and is a member club of BC Nature (formerly Federation of BC Naturalists). BMN is a registered non-profit Society with charitable income status.

Our objectives are:

- to promote the enjoyment of nature
- to foster an interest in, and an appreciation of, our environment
- to promote the accessibility and maintenance of natural areas, particularly local areas
- to actively pursue the conservation & preservation of the natural world

President: Ian McArthur, imcart@telus.net (604.939.4039) Phil

Vice President: Brian Wormald, brian@wormald-online.com (604.537.3717)

Treasurer: Edie Kernighan, ekernighan@gmail.com (604.937.0958)

Past President: Phillip Buchan, pbuchan@mac.com (604.329.5537)

Recording Secretary: Vacant

Members-at-Large: Laura Dupont (lauradupont@shaw.ca), Elaine Golds (elaine.golds@gmail.com), Kathy Leko (kleko@telus.net), Victoria Otton (svotton@gmail.com), Jeff Rudd (rudd@sfu.ca), Helen Howes (helenhowes@shaw.ca)

Membership Secretary: Brian Wormald, brian@wormald-online.com (604.537.3717)

BC Nature Club Representative:

Victoria Otton, svotton@gmail.com (604.937.5379)

Education and Conservation Committee:

burkemtnnats@gmail.com

Nature and Feeder Watch:

Liz Thunstrom, elizabeththunstrom@telus.net (604.939.9571)

BMN-Friends of DeBoville Slough Committee:

2fodbs.bmn@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Joëlle Régnier, BMNnewsletter@gmail.com

Newsletter Design: Catherine Ho, catherineymho@icloud.com

BMN Publications: 10 newsletters a year (except July and August)

"Discover Nature in the Tri-Cities" 2015, (40 pages) a children's nature guide; available on our website (40 pages) and from local libraries

Natural History Brochures: Miller Park Ravine, DeBoville Slough, Riverview Lands, Coquitlam River Corridor

Bird Brochures: Minnehada Regional Park and Area, DeBoville Slough, Como Lake, The Herons of Colony Farm and our checklist for the Colony Farm Park birds

Plant Brochures: Colony Farm, DeBoville Slough

Wildlife Inventory of the Shoreline Park System: 1994, (121 pages) is available on our website

Our Backyard Wilderness: A Park Proposal, by Mark Haddock, 1992, (23 pages, plus appendices) available at Coquitlam Poirier Library

The Riverview Hospital Site: "Respecting Its Past, Realizing Its Future", by Elaine Golds, Victoria Otton and Lori Austin (2004), 26 pages available on our website [website](#).