

Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2006



Present were: Jerry Azevedo, Cheryl Bastedo, Carol Black, Pam Frier, Mike Hoebel, Libby McClelland, Brian Mitchell, Roger Pettit, Dick Pitschka.

The wild turkeys of Galiano that wander the mid-island area have proved to be wily and quick, so while everyone else on the island was having a Thanksgiving feast, a group of hungry Naturalists still in camouflage gear got straight to business...

1. "Bird Checklist": Someone complained that the draft checklist didn't include 'turkey', and that started an avalanche of quibbles about which birds to include. Mike tried to explain the difference between 'rare' and 'accidental', but when someone asked to include 'parakeet', he decided to keep quiet and rely on his own judgment about which birds make the final cut. He did say he'd send out an updated draft within the month, surely provoking another lively debate at the next meeting. To deflect any further comment now, someone proposed that the next in our series of local guides be 'A Field Guide to Galiano Dogs'.
2. Christmas Bird Count: Mike announced that the Christmas bird count this year would be moved up to December 17th to accommodate the birder bullies on Salt Spring, who are accustomed to an early count. A cry arose from the room as chairs were scraped back, people leapt from their seats, and fists banged on the table. The Naturalists finally settled down when Mike explained that Salt Spring is one of those islands, unlike Galiano, beset by political strife. The most vocal birders there usually leave the island for Christmas, making a post-Christmas count politically untenable for the island. Since the Galiano Audubon count circle now includes part of Salt Spring, twenty years of Galiano tradition was sacrificed for the moral high-ground of accommodation. And who knows, we might like the earlier count better. To sweeten the pot, and with food so much on our minds today, we decided to host a post-count potluck at the South Hall. Mike said he would bring his slides of birding in Costa Rica, but most people said they'd come anyway.
3. "Active Page" column: Not above a few bullying tactics themselves, the Naturalists tried to browbeat some of the newer members into writing the December column, but the best we could get was a commitment from DickP for an article next spring and a promise from Carol for two articles at some future date. Trying another tack, someone started talking casually about slime molds, about how they send up large protuberant fruiting stalks, and Pam's eyes lit up and she said, "Right up my alley." She'll be doing the December article.
4. Another Commercial Idea: Libby told the group about a new product she's seen – film overlays for windows that are invisible from inside the house but scare off birds from outside. Freely admitting that these would do nothing for people with birds inside the house, she still suggested that the Naturalists get ahold of a bunch of these and sell them to raise money to buy more t-shirts. Those Naturalists that live in houses with windows encouraged her to pursue the idea. And then, as if the talk of commercial enterprise primed the pump, the discussion flowed naturally to the old business idea of selling birdhouse/bathhouse kits. The variation raised at this meeting was to get a bunch of kids together to build birdhouses. No one pointed out the major flaw with this plan: kids don't have much money.

5. Chamber Map: The Galiano Chamber of Commerce is designing a simple island map for visitors and is inviting various community groups to participate. Mike will represent the Naturalists at the meetings. While he's there, maybe he can talk about taking out a membership for the Naturalists to recognize the group's new direction in capitalism.
6. Next meeting time and place: MONDAY, November 13th at 1 PM, Activity Center.

When everyone stopped talking for a moment, we heard from outside a 'gobble-gobble', and a half dozen hungry Naturalists bolted through the door, leaving only Jerry to pick up the overturned chairs and Carol who was clutching today's door prize: a house wren nest of twigs and feathers.

Corrections and comments to:

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