

Christmas Bird Count



Lasqueti Island's Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count will take place Monday, Dec 29th, 2014. This is Audubon's 115th count and Lasqueti Island's 28th. It is the longest running Citizen Science survey in the world, and you can join tens of thousands of other participants in the fun. You can go out with a group and count all day, or you can spend half an hour and count the birds in your yard. Just count the species that you see and the number of individual birds and keep track of the distance you cover and the time spent counting. It's a good idea to get a checklist of birds seen at previous counts and don't forget to bring your camera. Pictures make identification of unknown and unusual birds much easier.

Prior to the turn of the century, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas Side Hunt. They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered and furred quarry won.

Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a "Christmas Bird Census"—that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them.

So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Frank M. Chapman and the enthusiasm of twenty-seven dedicated birders, twenty-five Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined. Now there are 23,000 different counts with millions of individual birds counted.

The longterm perspective made possible by the Christmas Bird Count is vital for conservation-



Oystercatchers and Bonaparte's Gulls- photo Sheila Ray

ists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat, and it helps identify environmental issues.

Winter Birding notes

Now that the lakes in the interior of our province are frozen, our "winter ducks" are returning to the bays of Lasqueti. Buffleheads are back. I have seen them being pursued by Eagles. I am watching for the return of goldeneyes, scoters and maybe Long-tailed ducks. Amongst a flock of gulls feeding out in the Sabine Channel I spotted some alcids, Common Murre, Rhinoceros Auklets, Ancient and Marbled Murrelets, not seen around here in the summer. Although the warblers have left it is now easier to spot those flocks of kinglets, chickadees, nuthatches and brown creepers in the braches of leafless trees. You might want to keep your humming bird feeder full for the Anna's hummingbirds that stay all winter and are increasing in number on Lasqueti.

For more information about Lasqueti's count call Sheila Ray 8884.

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Why protect your land with a Conservation Covenant?

We live on a very special island because of the amount of Coastal Douglas-fir forest and the relatively small human population. Put into perspective, we live in the largest area of the last 1% of this ecosystem still intact in BC!

Recently, LINC put out a small booklet on conservation options. One option is a Conservation Covenant, which means you can protect areas of your land and still live on and enjoy it! But what is the point in putting a covenant on your land here on Lasqueti? Here are a few reasons:

- ✓ You will be protecting it beyond your ownership to the next owner, ensuring that areas you decide to protect will remain that way.
- ✓ You will be protecting some of the last remnant areas of the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem, which is provincially listed (at risk of loss).
- ✓ You will be leaving a legacy of carbon-storing trees and wetlands that will help mitigate climate change.
- ✓ You will potentially help protect some of the red and blue-listed species which are typically associated with this ecosystem, including the sharp-tailed snake (to be featured in our next issue) that eat those garden destroying slugs!
- ✓ You will get a tax deduction each year if you also register your covenant through ITF's NAPTEP program.



Anna's Hummingbird, a year-round resident on Lasqueti

Please contact LINC to find out more about this wonderful option to protect your land, give a legacy to the future, while still living on and enjoying it!

~~~~ LINC Report on activities ~~~~

Squitty Bay Day: Last August, we had a wonderful day at Squitty Bay. Many people came out to join us in celebrating this outstanding park, protected with help from many Lasqueti residents. Thanks very much to Dana Lepofski, Ken Lertzman, Doug Hopwood, Marie-Ange Fall, and Wayne Bright for leading the enlivening walks and sharing their knowledge of the forests, archeological elements, beach life, and salmon restoration work done in the stream that runs through the park. Thanks to Bonnie Olesko and the Islands Trust Fund, we shared some lunch together, and laughed together as we reviewed the entries for the scavenger hunt.

The expanded park was created through contributions of \$107,000 from the BC Trust for Public Lands, \$18,000 each from The Nature Trust of BC and Marine Parks Forever Society, \$5,000 from the Islands Trust Fund's Opportunity Fund, and \$130,000 raised through community connections (private donors and foundations).

Lasqueti Island, Conserving this Special Place.

This small booklet, funded by the Islands Trust Fund, was sent out in late summer to all landowners on Lasqueti. It is now posted on our website at Lasqueti.ca/linc. This gives a basic introduction to threats, opportunities and conservation options available to islanders.

Membership: LINC now has about 47 members, some that go back to our formation in 1997, and some who recently signed up. Membership fees help us pay our annual society dues, pay for this newsletter, and give us a small base from which to operate. Join us by sending \$5 each year.

Donations: LINC accepts donations for our charitable conservation work. You can stipulate what you wish your donation to go toward: Land Acquisitions, Operations, Education & Outreach. All donations are tax deductible.

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